

LWVUS MISSION STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

We Have Been Busy

JUNE 2013

In June, six months ago, LWVSC started a ‘new year,’ with the Annual Meeting giving us newly-elected officers and board members. A one-day retreat later in the month determined the focus for our activities and forums for the coming League year.

OUR 2013-2015 LWVSC BOARD



Connie Jones, Jane Lord, Janet Orlando, E. Anne Riley, Valerie Meisel, Jo Klinge, Esther Shelton, Sue Claire Harper, Sheila Zanine. (Not pictured: Michele Tashman and Carole Somers.)

JULY

League members marched in the Lewes DooDah parade and in Bethany Beach on July 4.

AUGUST

We celebrated Women’s Equality Day with a public showing of “Iron-Jawed Angels” at the South Coastal Library on August 25. (See article on page 5)



E. Anne Riley, Esther Shelton, Janet Orlando, Connie Jones, Jane Lord, E. Hammond

SEPTEMBER

The Sea-Level Rise Committee assisted LWVDE with their 10-day DE Sea-Level Awareness Week (Article on page 6)

This year's National Voter Registration Day took place on Tuesday, September 24th. The Sussex League conducted voter registration events at two locations

OCTOBER

On October 5 and 12th the League sponsored afternoon teas at Lavender Fields in Milton, Delaware. The events were fund-raisers for the LWVSC.

Extreme Weather Events was the topic of the Public Forum on October 8. (Article on page 6)

NOVEMBER

On November 12, 2013 the LWVSC held a public forum to introduce Sussex County residents to the LWVUS Agriculture Policy Study. (Article on page 7)



Marie Mayor, Nadyne Rosin, Anne Riley, Joan Stern, Janet Denman, Jane Lord

DECEMBER

The Kent County League hosted a holiday luncheon for the three Delaware leagues on the PolyTech campus in Woodside, DE on December 13. Eight attended from Sussex.



Claire Snyder-Hall, Jo Klinge, E. Anne Riley, Janet Orlando, Sandy Spencer, Carol Jones, Jane Lord (not shown: Valerie Meisel)

JANUARY

The second Forum on Agriculture was held on January 14. The Consensus Meeting was on January 27.

FEBRUARY

The Education Committee is working on the Forum on Education on February 11.



Sue Claire Harper, Bill O'Connor, Esther Shelton, Barbara Mullin, Janet Denman, Martha Redmond

From the President's Pen

I can feel my feet sinking deeper into the Sussex County sand. Although I moved to Delaware less than two years ago, *this* place is quickly becoming *my* place. This emerging feeling of "home" has a lot to do with joining the LWVSC—almost as soon as the Comcast man hooked up the computer and phone!

Not only do League members always make one feel welcome, but learning the ins-and-outs and ups-and-downs of Sussex County also accelerates a sense of belonging. Pronouns shift toward inclusion, as "their" issues become "ours." Public concerns become personal as we talk about our communities, our schools, our water, our farms, our roads, our sewers.

Feeling at home signifies comfort, and comfort requires knowing what is going on around you. I never leave a League meeting without having learned something new! At Board meetings, I learn about what is going on in the County Council and at school board meetings, about local festivals and events, about proposed construction, zoning, and skyrocketing flood insurance (even where to buy a new sound system). Our public forums this fall brought me up to speed on county preparations for extreme weather events and set me to thinking about how national agriculture policies relate to our county farms. At fun lunches I learn about personal experiences and concerns and hear different points of view—all while discovering what's on the menu at area restaurants.

As I celebrate my second New Year in Sussex County, I am grateful for new knowledge and a sense of belonging imparted by new friends. No matter where we have come from or how different we may be, we are bound by our mutual caring about this place—*our home*.

A New Year's toast to you and to the LWVSC!
Jane (Jane Lord, President, LWVSC)

Calendar of Coming Events

For additional information go to the calendar page at www.sussexlww.org or email sussexlww@gmail.com
 Notices of other events and pertinent reminders will be sent as appropriate. Please check the website for Sussex County Governmental and School Board Meetings, as well as LWVDE events.

January

Monday, 1/06	10:00 AM	LWVSC Board Meeting	email for directions
Tuesday, 1/14	1:00 – 3 PM	Public Forum on Agriculture	Beebe Medical Arts Bldg., Rte. 24
Monday, 1/27	1:30 – 4 PM	Agriculture Consensus Meeting, No.1	Beebe Medical Arts Bldg. Rte. 24
Friday, 1/31	Noon-2:00	January Fun Lunch	Chinatown Buffet, Coastal Hwy.

February

Monday, 2/03	9:30 AM	LWVSC Board Meeting	email for directions
Tuesday, 2/11	1:00 – 3 PM	Public Forum on Education	Beebe Medical Arts Bldg
Friday, 2/28	Noon – 2 PM	February Fun Lunch	La Tonalteca, Millsboro

March

Monday, 3/03	9:30 AM	LWVSC Board Meeting	email for directions
Tuesday, 3/11	1:00 – 3 PM	Public Forum on Land Use	Beebe Medical Arts Bldg
Wed., 3/19	8:30 -4 PM	League Day in Dover	email for directions
Friday, 3/28	Noon – 2 PM	March Fun Lunch	Pizza King, Seaford

April

Monday, 4/07	9:30 AM	LWVSC Board Meeting	email for directions
Tuesday, 4/8	1:00 – 3 PM	Public Forum on Voter Issues	Beebe Medical Arts Bldg
Friday, 4/25	Noon – 2 PM	April Fun Lunch	Bethany Blues, Rehoboth

May

Monday, 5/5	9:30 AM	LWVSC Board Meeting	email for directions
Fri-Sun, 5/16-18	TBA	Retreat/Council (all welcome)	Camden, DE
To be announced		LWVSC Annual Meeting	TBA
Monday, May 26	Noon	May Fun Lunch	TBA

June

Monday, 6/2	9:30 AM	LWVSC Board Meeting	email for directions
Fri/Wed, 6/6-11	All Day!	LWVUS National Convention	Dallas, Texas
To be announced	Noon	June Fun Lunch	TBA

Welcome New Members!

Cathy Abbotts
 Lorna Dempsey Cole
 Nancy Kassner
 Martha Redmond

Janet Ambrose
 Bette Goldman
 Joyce Lenzo
 Jay Schiavo
 George Thompson

Martha Austin
 Laura D Hill
 Roberta Lindsay
 Michele Tashman

Not so long ago, the LWV Sussex County members were clustered near the towns of Rehoboth Beach and Lewes. While Lewes is still the predominant zip code for LWVSC, the area it covers is largely rural so people living in it may live closer to Milton than to downtown Lewes. This group of new members reflects the diversity in Sussex County. The towns the members live in or near are Lincoln, Millsboro, Millville, Laurel, and Ocean View. Their equally diverse backgrounds bring new energy and perspectives to LWVSC program planning. LWVSC is delighted to have you as members.Valerie Meisel, Chair

Observer Corps Reaches Fifth Anniversary

This month marks five years of League of Women Voters members attending government meetings as Observers who report back on issues related to League positions. This presence has provided an up close view of how our local government functions and identified areas that require focus and public education. As we conclude this year, we will gather to prepare a report to County Council about what has been observed, good and bad, and present that report in March as a Sunshine Day activity. All League members are invited to attend this event. Of course, League members are invited to attend meetings at any time. Accompanying an Observer to a County Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment, or School Board meeting is wonderful educational experience!

Although progress has often seemed terribly slow, looking back over five years, we have seen significant improvements in responding to the public's right to know: more availability and clarity on agendas; information packets previously provided only to the press and Council, now are available to all; better adherence to regulations by the Board of Adjustment, better access to assistance for the hearing impaired ; good response to Freedom of Information requests, among other improvements. Most important, officials are aware that they are being observed by League members.

In the past year, the Observer Corps has also begun and expanded its attendance at School Board meetings with Observers now at three school districts- Cape Henlopen, Indian River and Laurel. Attendance at these meeting has proved to provide much insight into the issues facing our county. Beginning this month, Sue Claire Harper will be the Coordinator of the School Board Observers and forward their information for inclusion in the monthly report to the Board. I welcome and appreciate Sue Claire's taking on this responsibility.

I will no longer be coordinating the Observer Corps as we move into its sixth year. Currently there are fifteen members of the Observer Corps and I am looking forward to someone from the League stepping up to work with this great group of people who are committed to making our community a better place.

Observers:

Sandy Spence; Esther Shelton, Jo Klinge, Sheila Zanine, Barbara Mullin, Michele Tashman, Janet Ambrose , Connie Jones, Sue Claire Harper, Janet Denman, Martha Redmond, Ann Couzens, Cathy Thompson, Valerie Meisel, Carole Somers*Carole Somers, Chair*

Women's Equality Day Event

Committee: Connie Jones (Chair), Janet Orlando, Anne Riley, and Esther Shelton

The Sussex County League celebrated the 93rd anniversary of Women's Equality Day with a screening of "Iron Jawed Angels" at South Coastal Library on August 25, 2013 at 6:30PM. This riveting and poignant film is based on the true story about Alice Paul and Lucy Burns, two committed young women who led a group of rebel activists to pursue equality for all American women. They were resolute in their focus and stood steadfast in the face of fierce opposition, sacrificing love, health and well being to achieve their goal. Love vs. career, male dominance, radical vs. conservative groups, government ignorance, racial rights and feminism are woven

into this critically acclaimed movie. Before and after the screening, a continuous video loop of “Bad Romance Parody” was shown. This upbeat and engaging video complemented the movie, and captivated the audience. Esther Shelton and Anne Riley dressed up in period attire, adding a charming “life in the day” element to the event.

Prior to the screening, Jane Lord, President of the LWVSC and Edie Shean-Hammond, Director of Tourism North-East Region, and Superintendent of Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site, made brief presentations relevant to equality and voter’s rights. Jane focused on the “struggle for equality” and how the struggle must continue in light of recent actions to restrict voting rights. Edie introduced the concept of “technology as a social change driver”. In the early 1900’s, new technologies, such as manufactured stoves, enabled women to “move away from the kitchen and into the halls of debate”.

It is hard to believe that less than a hundred years ago, women could not own property, had no legal claim to monies earned and could not vote. We owe a debt of gratitude to the courageous and heroic women who struggled for more than 70 years to secure the power of the vote for all American women. The right to vote is a basic human right and we must continue to uphold this basic right for all our citizens.*Connie Jones*

SEA-LEVEL RISE COMMITTEE

The committee first met on 8-16-13. The responsibility of *two* events timed in very close succession needed quick responses. We had been asked by the LWVDE to assist them with refreshments and other duties as assigned during the 10-day DE Sea-Level Awareness Week. Their title was **Sea Level Rise & Flooding**. 70 people attended the program and movie on September 20 at St. Peter’s Church in Lewes. We assisted in their advertising, poster distribution and the September 20th event.

Our next event was the forum **Extreme Weather Events: What Sussex County Does & What You Can do Yourself to be Safe** on October 8th. Speakers included Debra Jones, a county employee with 25 years experience and now the Public Information Officer and chair of the state Emergency Medical Dispatch Steering and Area-Medical Committee. She presented the many functions of the Emergency Operations Center for Sussex County, which is located at the airport near Georgetown. It is impressive that this state of the art agency is working behind the scenes with a dedicated, competent and experienced staff helping to keep us safe with sophisticated communications, coordination with other agencies on a daily basis, as well as preparation before and during major weather events.

Wendy Carey, PhD, is a county treasure and a Coastal Hazards specialist in the DE Sea Grant Program at the University of Delaware. She was the editor of the highly acclaimed Delaware Homeowners Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards (2012). She works with local governments and coastal communities regarding beaches, shoreline erosion, climate change, sea-level rise and coastal storms. She provides information to us about those issues and some of those in the Handbook.

George Junkin, PhD, is a member of the South Bethany Town Council and Chair of their Sea-Level Rise and Storm Surge Committee. George presented a number of very graphic power point views of floods and damaging results to his community on Little Assawoman Bay from Hurricane Sandy and other storms of the past.

John Mateyko, Architect, LLC, President of the DE State Board of Architects has 33 years of designing for sustainability and “Green” structures. He urges steps to increase survivability by taking such actions as these: elevate mechanical and electrical equipment (heat pumps) as high off the ground as possible, anchor all tanks, store fans and extension cords in attic for drying after the flood, install a storm proof sump-pump or back-up generator, get toxins out of low lying areas, remove “ramming rods” (wood over 3 feet long), have an emergency kit, and other practical wisdom in the short-term. He also urges support of policy changes such as adopting the International Green Code. In the long-term, he notes the strategic retreat from along the coast will be needed for many homes. A number of handouts were made available. The forum attendance was good and the evaluations were very good to excellent.
.....E. Anne Riley, Committee Chair

Sussex County LWV Agriculture Study Committee

On November 12, 2013 the SCLWV held a public forum to introduce the LWVUS Agriculture Policy Study. LWVSC members Joan Stern, Janet Denman, Nadyne Rosin, Anne Riley and Marie Mayor tackled many of the issues addressed in the study, such as water pollution, food labeling, food allergens, genetically modified organisms, and national agriculture finance issues.

The scope of the study focused narrowly on two important issues facing American agriculture: 1) **current technology** issues in agriculture, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agriculture water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) **current agriculture finance issues**, including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

At the November forum, a brief overview of each issue was presented. After the overview, attendees asked questions, shared comments and made recommendations for further study. The conference room was packed with people who asked questions and offered many informed comments. One member of the audience joined the LWVSC and volunteered to attend the LWVSC consensus meeting on January 27, where she will serve as a resource in the discussion about poultry production farming in Sussex County.

A second forum was held on January 14. At this event the panelists were Sussex County farmers Charles Smith of TS Smith and Sons of Bridgeville, and Hattie Allen, owner of Hattie’s Garden of Lewes. These local farmers addressed how large and small niche farming can add to the agriculture economy and bring interesting and healthy foods to the local tables. A lively question and comment session followed the presentations. The reality that farm subsidies are not available to owners of small diversified farms but instead go to the large commodity (wheat, corn, soybean) growers was new information for many who attended.

On January 27, the LWVSC Agriculture Study Consensus Meeting was held at Beebe Medical Arts Building. At this session, League members identified those issues outlined by the National League on which we reached consensus. The results will be sent to our Board and then forwarded to National. As each local League reports its consensus (or lack thereof) to LWVUS, the reports are consolidated, and, based on this information, a committee formulates the position which, when approved by the National Board, can be used for action. No action can be initiated on which the League does not have a stated position, nor can action be taken which is opposed to the League’s position.

As previously announced at the November 12 meeting, the farm bill remains locked in the US House of Representatives and the US Senate Joint Conference Committee (see the LWVSC Facebook page for up-to-the minute news articles about the topics addressed in the agriculture committee.)

Our sincere thanks to our committee for their hard work and a job well done.....*Marie Mayor and Nadyne Rosin, Committee Co-Chairs*

A Note from the Voter Editor

With our excellent website available to each of us, the Voter will remind you of what we have done and suggest where we will be going. It will be published in January and July. We will continue to send notices of coming events, e.g. forums and Fun Lunches to all members. Please send your comments, for and against, this new direction for the Voter.*Jo Klinge, Editor*

For Your Information...February 14 is the 94th Birthday of the League of Women Voters.

The League of Women Voters works to improve our systems of government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy. The League is strictly nonpartisan; it neither supports nor opposes candidates for office at any level of government. At the same time, the League is wholeheartedly political and works to influence policy through advocacy.

Some History:

The League of Women Voters was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt in 1920 at the last convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, six months prior to the passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote.

The League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. From the beginning, the League has been an activist, grassroots organization that believes that citizens should play a critical role in shaping public policy. It was then, and is now, a nonpartisan organization, neither supporting, nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government. Its basic purpose is "to make democracy work for all citizens" via voter education, and to influence policy through advocacy.

The League of Women Voters of Delaware was founded in 1921 with members from Dover, Middletown, Milford, Smyrna, Delmar, Georgetown and Newark. The new state League held its first Convention in 1923; its early activities included voters service, work toward abolition of child labor and support of school construction. However, the League disbanded a few years later, then was reestablished in 1953 with the formation of the Newark and Wilmington Leagues. The Laurel League was formed in 1957 and reorganized as the Sussex County League in 1976. The Dover League, recognized in 1966, became the Kent County League in 2008. The Wilmington and Newark Leagues merged in 1994 to become the New Castle County League.

The League of Women Voters of Delaware (LWVDE) was recognized by the League of Women Voters of the United States at Convention March 29, 1958. Its first study, "An Evaluation of the Financial System of the State of Delaware," resulted in a position announced in April 1961, "Support of measures which promote the needs of a growing state." A study of the fiscal aspects of education resulted in a position favoring equalization of school support and increased funding for public schools. Currently, two studies are in progress: Agriculture and Education. Local forums are being held on these topics.